

## Behavioral and Social Sciences Research Coordinating Committee

### Minutes of May 11, 2001 Meeting

#### **Attendance**

The NIH Behavioral and Social Sciences Research Coordinating Committee met on May 11, 2001 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. in the Gateway Building, Room 525. Ronald Abeles (OD/OBSSR), Chairperson, presided. Members and alternate members in attendance were: Deborah Ader (NIAMS), Joy Boyer (NHGRI), Yvonne Bryan (NINR), Emmeline Edwards (NINDS), Lynne Haverkos (NICHD), Suzanne Heurtin-Roberts (NCI), Susan Martin (NIAAA), Emeline Otey (NIMH), Georgeanne Patmios (OD/OBSSR), Janice Phillips (NINR), Lana Shekim (NIDCD), Paula Skedsvold (OD/OBSSR), Susan Stark (NIAMS), Richard Suzman (NIA), and Marina Volkov (NIDA)

Guests in attendance were Lauren Fasig (SRCD) and Angela Sharpe (COSSA).

#### **Presentation by Dr. Reid Lyon, NICHD, on Solution Oriented Research in Child Development and Education: A Critical New Role for the Behavioral and Social Sciences in Meeting the President's Challenge to "Leave No Child Behind."**

Dr. Lyon briefed the group on NICHD's role over the years in working with first, Governor George W. Bush of Texas, and now President George W. Bush, on the issue of childhood learning. The collaboration between NICHD and President Bush began when Governor Bush asked for the help of NICHD 6 years ago in explaining how children learn to read, what impedes the process of learning this complex behavior, how to help children whose first language is Spanish, how to prevent children from having problems learning to read, and how to address reading problems when they are observed in children. Dr. Lyon described the several research programs in NICHD's Child Development and Behavior Branch that were developed in response to addressing these concerns, and some of the scientific evidence resulting from these studies.

NICHD is currently working with the Bush Administration to help translate research results in this area into concrete policies to address these issues. President Bush asked that NICHD help address especially why many communities are unaware of research evidence in this area, and how the scientific evidence can help improve existing federal programs, such as Head Start, in their ability to better prepare children of disadvantaged backgrounds to read.

Dr. Lyon discussed the Administration's commitment to recruit Assistant Secretaries in relevant departments (e.g., Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, etc.) who have scientific backgrounds in these areas, in addition to managerial expertise.

Points raised in the discussion included the difficulty of creating a seamless set of programs that relate to one another and that are based on scientific evidence of what works, and the difficulty of creating such a system when much of the work is decentralized at local levels.

#### **BSSR Components of IC Health Disparities Research Plans: NHGRI and NIDCR**

For the past few months, individual committee members have presented the behavioral and social science components of their respective IC's Health Disparities Strategic Plans. At this meeting, Dr. Patricia Bryant presented NIDCR's plan, and Dr. Joy Boyer presented NHGRI's plan.

The Health Disparities Strategic Plan of NHGRI is available at [http://www.nhgri.nih.gov/HGP/Reports/sp\\_health\\_disparities.html](http://www.nhgri.nih.gov/HGP/Reports/sp_health_disparities.html). Key points include efforts to: attract members of minority communities to become involved in researching the ethical, legal and social issues related to genetics; and bring in scientists from different disciplines such as

economics, anthropology and philosophy. Points raised in the discussion included the area of genes and behavior. Since the scientific community is moving ahead in this area, NHGRI has established an advisory group to consider how to develop an NIH research agenda in this sensitive area.

The Health Disparities Strategic Plan of NIDCR is available at [http://www.nidr.nih.gov/research/health\\_disp.asp](http://www.nidr.nih.gov/research/health_disp.asp). Key topics include (1) the first-ever Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health in America which highlights individual preventive behaviors, community-based preventive strategies, access to services and determinants of utilization of services, and the effects of poor oral health, systemic health and quality of life; and (2) the September 1999 RFA for Centers for Research to Reduce Oral Health Disparities (DE-99-003) that emphasizes primarily health disparities involving children and their caregivers.

### **Next BSSR Symposium**

*Sleep, Circadian Rhythms, and Cognitive Performance*

Mary Carskadon, Ph.D.

Brown University

David F. Dinges, Ph.D.

University of Pennsylvania

May 21, 2001, 9-10:30 a.m.

Building 1, Wilson Hall

### **Next BSSR CC meeting**

June 8, 2001

Gateway Building, Room 525

7201 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda MD

(this June meeting was subsequently cancelled)